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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study using summary and internal comparisons was designed to discover client perceptions of the Lifelong Learning Center's services in regard to their needs and expectations. One hundred fifty-five clients rated on a five-point scale their satisfaction with access conditions, staff interactions, and information exchange. Also measured were career and education needs and results. Two global questions ("How it all turned out" and "feelings about life as a whole") were asked. Client interviews concentrated on how the experience fitted into the participants' lives. Counselor support and nurturance were found to be the most important first contact elements. Access was judged quite satisfactory; low ratings were assigned to information provided. Clarifying employment goals was mentioned most on the career needs scale; seventy-seven rated finishing school a primary educational need. Career information responses reflected educational job requirements to be a major concern. Educational information needs revealed heavy emphasis on college and postgraduate programs. Outcomes showed that 101 clients took some action related to their center association. Ninety-nine globally rated their center experience satisfying or very satisfying. Feelings of life satisfaction were below the national population; twice as many as the national population appeared mostly dissatisfied. Interviews found that client "readiness" characteristics differed greatly. (CSS)

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CLIENT REACTION TO LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER SERVICE: A FIRST APPROXIMATION

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A. Introduction

Neither the appearance on campus of "non-traditional" students in larger numbers nor the emergence of the idea of "lifelong learning" caught higher education unaware. But awareness has proved to be a mere prelude to understanding and a good part of the decade has been given over to specifying the significant components of these phenomena. Two main lines of investigation have emerged, both of them rather full.

The effort to describe the characteristics of non-traditional learners enrolled in the framework of postsecondary education has generated interesting questions. The number of participants has been fixed more clearly by the triennial "statistical snapshots" of adult education compiled by NCES (Gilford 1975). A better appreciation of the range of agencies sharing the educational enterprise has also come about. Other descriptive studies followed the traditional concepts of sociology and examined various patterns of stratification among the new matriculants (Cross 1971) (Holmstrom 1973). More recently Munday (1976) has reconciled various descriptors to give a composite of characteristics. A motivational typology has also been described (Morstain, Smart 1977).

A second line of inquiry has sought to identify the needs and interests of the general population with respect to education. These "demand studies" represent a kind of market analysis based on the

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assumption that educational agencies can respond with program offerings (Carp et al. 1975) (Radner, Miller 1970). Cross (1977) has observed that such studies have shown remarkable consistency about who is interested in further education and the kinds of programs they want. Cross points out that the next steps involve a deeper interpretation of data already available as well as "more data about how much adults know about present opportunities and which barriers are real and which are simply convenient rationalizations."

This study is set in that domain of interpretation. By examining the reactions of those who are making the first explorations of possibilities that may include educational activity we get some impression of the "situational" and "dispositional" factors cited by Cross.

The paragraphs that follow note briefly the nature of the Lifelong Learning Center at Reading (Pennsylvania) Public Library, describe a sample group of clients who came to that Center in the first seven months of operation, summarize their reactions to the experience, establish educationally significant patterns to those reactions, and offer some conclusions on effectiveness and planning.

B. The Setting and the Lifelong Learning Center

Reading, Pennsylvania is an industrial community of about 95,000 population set in an SMSA which includes Berks County giving a total population of 294,000. The city is a nexus for a variety of cultural groups ranging from newly arrived Puerto Rican laborers to "old order" Amish whose arrival antedates the establishment of the nation and whose cultural unity is protected by law. Both the urban community and the

farm areas include a wide range of ethnic, racial, and national minorities. Industrial activity is diverse ranging from furniture and textiles to metal fabrication and food processing. A full range of educational facilities from vocational-technical and proprietary schools through master's level graduate study is available in the area. Among the local institutions are Albright College, Kutztown State College, Berks Campus of Penn State, and Reading Area Community College. Within commuting distance are Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Muhlenberg College, Cedarcrest College, and Moravian College.

The Lifelong Learning Center at Reading Public Library began operations in December 1976. Funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Education was provided on the basis of proposals invited from libraries and similar community agencies. One other counseling center at the Free Library of Philadelphia was funded at the same time. The Commonwealth has elected to try a variety of counseling and service programs for adults rather than to commit all resources to a particular mode of delivery.

In defining the mission for this Center, the Director took a pragmatic view which, as it turns out, provided a very solid base. A clear decision was made to emphasize information and counseling foregoing for the moment activities such as the evaluation of credentials or direct advocacy of client interests to institutions. It was recognized that the fund of information about education and careers was already rich. There is, as well, a rather complete network of corporations, institutions, and agencies in the Reading-Berks County area able to sustain and develop individual decisions about either careers or

education. What was clearly missing in the landscape of the adult community was a vehicle, an interactive option, to deliver appropriate combinations of information to individuals and sustain them through the decision process. The library, of course, is a rich depository for data but the capacity to process it in individualized ways is somewhat limited. For this reason, the principal mission of the Center was to improve the transfer of information through the mediation of spcialized counselors. This kind of operation depended on a pair of concomitant activities: (a) the codificiation, regularization, and separation of specialized information sources in the library and elsewhere, (b) the construction of a specialized referral network reaching out to institutions, agencies, corporations, and key individuals in the community so that clients' interests could be realistically developed.

Although the educational tradition which lies closest to the Center is embodied in the national "brokering" movement, the LLC has defined for itself a limited set of functions. Brokering agencies tend to identify missions of advisement, assessment, and advocacy. The Reading Center offers what is essentially an information based program linked into a carefully cultivated referral network and supported by a counseling staff. The original proposal distinguishes between career planning and educational planning.

During the period under study, the staff consisted of two fulltime counselors--one, with training in the counseling field, the other with advanced training in library science. A receptionist and clerical support as needed were assigned. The project director participated on a part-time basis combining his interests in the Center with his duties

as Director of the Reading Public Library. Physical facilities were made available on the second floor of the downtown library building and consisted of a conference area which included display boards, semipartitioned interview stations, and a receiving area. The spaces present an open, pleasant, and colorful aspect to the visitor.

The study reported here was designed to search, within this framework of mission, functions, and operations, for perceptions the clients had of what was going on. Information about other follow-up studies was not neglected however. The National Center for Educational Brokering was helpful in identifying other significant efforts including the Regional Learning Center of Central New York and the extensive analysis made by the Educational Testing Service out of the Career Education Project (CEP) in Rhode Island. Even though this search of the literature provided general information, the final inquiry was tailored entirely to the interests of the Reading Center.

C. Design of the Study

Research in such a setting offered many options for design, many questions of an exploratory type that could be asked. Arbeiter (1976) wove his study of the Career Education Project in Rhode Island around the idea of a "demand" for counseling arising from a population "in transition." The Regional Learning Services of Central New York State study concentrated on educational needs, interests, and outcomes (Kordalewski 1977). Goeller (1977) has recommended that considerations of quality, access, relevancy to needs and expectations, and impact be introduced when non-traditional programs are examined.

1. The Survey Instrument

Because the primary mission of the Reading Center was so clear--providing information for effective action--it was possible to focus this study on client perception. How did the client perceive various aspects of Center activity in the light of his or her needs and expectations?

The question was separated into several parts which may be viewed as major variables:

a) Conditions of access

b) The nature of interaction with the staff

c) Aspects of the information exchange

d) The clients' recollection of needed services and information at the time of contact with the Center

e) The particular results or outcomes were listed so that they ran in gradation from behaviors completed to inactivity.

Clients were asked to evaluate the items related to their actual experience at the Center in terms of "satisfaction" on a five point scale (a, b, c above). Needs and results were evaluated in terms of "importance" to the client with ratings on a modified five point scale.

2. Other questions: Beyond the orderly set of topics are several sets of questions on the instrument that stand by themselves.

a) In looking at the "Quality of Life," Andrews, Withey, and Converse demonstrated close relationship between global measures and sectoral measures. Two global questions about the clients' outlook were included, one dealing with the Center experience, "how it all turned out," the other with the person's "feelings about life as a whole."

b) Behaviors to diffuse knowledge about the Center have special importance and two questions on the topic were included.

Taken together, these sections of the survey instrument give a straightforward pattern of design. Clients are asked to evaluate the process of coming to the Center, interacting with personnel, and carrying away the results for further action. They are asked to identify their expectations at the time of contact and to indicate the kind of information they were looking for to support those actions. There were opportunities for open comment on particularly satisfactory (or unsatisfactory) aspects of the experience and recommendations for improvement.

3. Interviews

There are many limitations to the use of questionnaires as a method of assessing individual human experiences. Responses are necessarily fragmented by the structure of the inquirer's statements. Important interactions easily escape and peripheral influences go identified. For adults, schooling and change are not central to day-to-day living. They must be planned for and fitted into life. To discover how people fitted their contact with the Lifelong Learning Center into the larger framework of life was the aim of the interview. Originally the interview document was planned as a structured schedule but after a pretest it was altered to a more open design. The topics covered included: motivation for contacting the Center, other previous contacts with agencies, persons with whom topics were discussed, and other life experiences related to the contact with the Center.

In summary, the survey instrument concentrated on how the Center was viewed and the interview concentrated on how the experience fitted into the person's life.

4. The Analytic Approach

The project was conceived in terms of description, carried out by summary and by internal comparisons. The survey document was constructed in consultation with the counselors and incorporated a few items from other learning center studies, from standard psychological tests of attitudes and feelings, and from national survey projects. A pretest session involving completion of the questionnaire and an interview about questions or confusions was conducted.

Response choices were all scaled on a five-point directional basis with "five" as the high value for "very satisfactory" or "very important." Open-ended questions and answer options were included where appropriate.

a) Data were first summarized in frequency tables. These provide a description of the ratings in terms of mean scores, medians, and standard deviations.

b) A second stage of analysis involved a search for significant differences among various subgroups of the sample. Cross tabulations were made on all rated items using age, education, marital status, sex, and "feelings about life as a whole" as the control variables, that is to say the dependent variable. For each table, values of chi square, Kendall's Tau (B), Eta,

Cramer's V, and Gamma were examined. No critical levels were established for these values but they were taken as clues to differences and associations.

c) Comments on the open-ended questions were too few to warrant coding but they were analyzed for content and grouped for discussion under appropriate variables.

d) The 22 interview protocols were content analyzed and key phrases introduced to illustrate particular points under each of the variables.

e) To establish "clusters" of clients who came to the Center with a similar pattern of interest, a modified factor analysis was performed. The cases and the variables, approximately 70 were transposed by rotating the matrix so that "cases rather than "variables" were displayed as factor groupings. The technique was used purely as an heuristic device and has no intrinsic significance. (Gorsuch 1974)

Throughout, the aim has been to cover as many explicit aspects as possible. Apparently the design comes very close to the limits of toleration because one person noted "you ask too many questions . . . form becomes boring."

D. The Clients and the Survey Sample

By July 1977, six months after the official opening, the Lifelong Learning Center at Reading had counted 1,653 individual contacts. The overwhelming majority, 1,340 cases, were tallied as "information seekers." Those client contacts that involved a meeting with the counselors

numbered 313 and are designated "counselees" in the subsequent pages. There was difficulty in the early months with record keeping procedures and, as a result, the information needed for careful sampling and mailing was not available for "information seekers."

For the counselees there was not only mailing information but also background information on age, education, and job activity. However, the number of 313 contacts was reduced by removals and multiple reportings to about 200 persons for the mailing list. Although these exigencies do not impair the validity of individual answers, they signal great caution to anyone seeking to draw general inferences from the data. Most of the major reactions are so strong that they leave little doubt about the favorable views of the counseled group. The reactions of the "information seekers," however, are just straws of opinion in the wind because we know so little about their silent and unidentifiable companions.

Collection procedures involved two mailings of the survey instrument, a cover letter, and a postpaid return envelope. A postcard reminder constituted the second follow up. Of the 329 in the sample, returns came from 165, a rate of 51 percent. Some of these replies came after the first tabulations and for that reason only 155 cases appear in some tables. There is some difficulty in designing a survey that can cover so broad a band of the population as came to this Center. Persons unfamiliar with rating instruments and questionnaires that require a judgement sometimes found the format too complex and called the counselors for advice.

Table 1

Description of Sample and Response Rate

A	Number Mailed (A)	Post Office Returns (B)	Net Contacts	Usable Responses (C)	Late Responses (D)	Total Returns (E)	Response Rate (E/A-B)
Counselees	200	8	192	107	2	109	.57%
Information Only	129	3	126	48	6	54	.43%
Totals	329		318			163	.51%

B	Volunteered for Interviews	Interview Completed
Counselee Interviews	39	22

Table 2

Description of Tabulated Sample: Selected Characteristics

A. Month of Contact:	Fall 76	Jan 77	Feb 77	Mar 77	Apr 77	May 77	June 77	July 77	Aug 77 (10 days)	No Info*	Number
	9	13	16	22	15	27	17	17	6	13	155

B. Level of Schooling:	5-7	Some High School	High School Diploma	Some College	Assoc. Degree	Bacc. Degree	Grad. Degree		No Info	Number
	2	5	41	21	6	14	13	102 100%	53	155

C. Age:	≤20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	> 65	No Info	Number
	9	18	14	20	8	7	14	4	2	2	2		155

D. Sex:	Male	Female	No Info	N
	35 33%	72 67%	48	155

*For those seeking information only, 54 of the respondents, much of the basic data was not available.

Occupational Background of Counselees

	Professional	Managers, Administrators	Sales, Clerical	Craftsmen, Foremen	Operators	Laborers	Service	Homemakers	Unemployed
Counselees	30	24	65	14	9	2	9	27	14
Percentages	.15	.12	.34	.07	.05	.01	.05	.14	.07

E. Findings and Detailed Information

When reading the results, it is convenient to keep the scale points in mind: the top value is "5" signifying a rating of "very satisfactory" in Part I, or "very important" in the later sections of the survey instrument. The mid-point is a value of "3" and the low point is "1," "very unsatisfactory." A value of zero is reserved for "no answer." The highest mean value in all the data is 4.6 and the lowest rating is 3.0.

In the first section dealing with client satisfaction, the respondents were asked to rate every statement because, presumably, every one fitted their experience. In Parts II and III, a slightly different process is involved. Here respondents are presented with a list of items. They are asked to, first, pick those which are applicable to their experience, and second, rate the selected items for importance.

Each section deals with a major variable, e.g., "access," "needs," etc. and incorporates all the information about it. The series dealing with "satisfaction" has been placed in order of importance reflected by client ratings. In other sections, too, an effort has been made to treat strongest factors first. To save space only the frequency distributions and other particularly important tables are included.* Indications from the cross tabulations are reported but not displayed.

F. Findings

1. Interaction With Staff (Table 3)

Without question the strongest favorable ratings, the fewest unsatisfactory ratings, and the fewest "no answers" were given on that

*A copy of the survey instrument will be provided on request.

group of questions which touched relationships with the staff. This highly favorable response was reinforced in detail by open-ended personal reactions. The interviews, too, were favorable. The deepest impressions on clients were made by the willingness and receptivity of the staff to address questions raised by the clients. On their side of the counseling dialogue, clients were very satisfied with the opportunities they had to present their own interests and needs. The lowest mean scores in this group of items went to ratings about the competence of the staff, not so much because of high dissatisfaction but rather because of differences in judgements about the level of satisfaction. This is reflected in the somewhat higher standard deviation (1.05) among respondents.

An examination of the differences in satisfaction that might have been associated with age, sex, educational level, marital status, etc. in the cross tabulations shows the side basis of approval still evident. Pressed to make distinctions, one can find a very slight decline in satisfaction among those whose global view of life is already pleasant and those with more education, possibly an evidence of the "ceiling effect."

More clearly than any numbers, the phrases used by respondents in open answers stand as illustrations of sound counseling and good rapport. The phrases themselves that appear under sources of "particular satisfaction" pinpoint the sources of satisfaction: "the extra effort and sincere interest of the staff," "they gave me ideas to follow," "they didn't rush me like (sic) I was a number instead of an individual," "the friendliest of counselors," "personal attention

Table 3

Interactions with Staff: Distribution of Ratings by Items

	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Neither Sat. Nor Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Satisfactory	No Answer	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Willingness and receptivity of staff	72	33	0	0	0	(2)	4.6	0.78
Opportunity to explain	88	46	11	2	0	(8)	4.5	0.69
Level of comfort in discussion	56	43	5	0	0	(2)	4.4	0.95
Amount of attention to you	60	39	4	1	0	(3)	4.4	0.97
Competence of staff	57	42	3	1	0	(4)	4.3	1.05

(N = 155)

Table 4

Access: Responses on Items Related to Access Ranked by Mean Score

	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Neither Sat. Nor Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very Unsatisfactory	No Answer	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Amount of time from staff	66	37	1	0	0	(3)	4.6	0.92
Telephone contact	68	44	6	1	0	(36)	4.5	0.64
Hours of operation	72	69	5	1	0	(8)	4.4	0.59
Location	69	67	7	4	0	(8)	4.4	0.70
Number of meetings	35	45	6	0	0	(21)	3.5	1.81
Time you spent on follow up	20	39	21	3	0	(24)	3.0	1.79

and interest," "approachability and competence," "the enthusiastic and encouraging attitudes of the staff." The sources of dissatisfaction are somewhat more cryptic: "I need more time to arrange my lifestyle," "the task involved in finding a job wasn't defined." Later in the questionnaire under the heading of Personal Reactions came the following comments: "Helpful, well received, comfortable enough to talk freely," "increased self confidence," "a very positive experience," "greatly encouraged to learn I can continue education and an exciting new life." Some respondents even mentioned the counselors by name, "Debbie," "Maryann," or by function "that helpful young man on the telephone." In summary, it is clear that the nature of counseling, its qualities of support and nuturance, are the most important element at the first point of contact in an information network.

2. Access (Table 4)

Problems with access are very few for the clients who participated in this survey. Among those who contacted the Center by telephone, there was good agreement as indicated by a low standard deviation that it was a very satisfactory experience. A slightly lower level of satisfaction is communicated about the hours of operation and the location. The pattern of responses about the number of meetings clients were able to arrange and the time spent in the follow up raised some questions about accessibility of the other parts of the network. Ratings on these items were comparatively low and non-response was high suggesting that there is an undefined problem here beyond the scope of the survey instrument.

When we examine the pattern of responses by age and the other control variables, the source of dissatisfaction with location and hours is pinpointed. The negative responses all came from a group of middle-aged, married women but the reasons for their dissatisfaction are not clearly evident.

Comments from the open-ended portions of the questionnaire do give us some additional clues about aspects of access. For example, people favorably impressed by "willingness to copy and to lend materials." "Center helped me expand my horizons--gave me info and personal contacts." The negative comments on access were usually specific: "Not enough parking," "I wish it had been in a private room," "called (reference) as suggested; they knew nothing about it--very disappointing," "they need a larger staff to handle all the material," "designated parking would be helpful especially in the evening." There was mention of an "image" problem by two commentators who saw downtown Reading at night as uninviting. A frequent recommendation was for "more advertisement," "more publicity." Some wanted more follow up: "waited a month for results in the mail." Younger clients showed slightly more satisfaction with access than others.

In summary, the overwhelming share of clients found access quite satisfactory. The specific comments and suggestions may assist the Center Director in planning and in making adjustments in parking and physical arrangements, but there is no overwhelming mandate for alterations.

3. Information (Table 5)

Reactions to those questions dealing with the nature of the information provided or expected reflect lower ratings, large numbers of "no answers," and a relatively large number (14) of unsatisfactory reactions. This may have been influenced by the recent nature of client experience. Almost half of the respondents dated their contact in May, June, and July. The fact that many expectations were still unrealized because of limitations of time undoubtedly has an effect but it cannot be accessed from this information.

One place where there is a further suggestion of dissatisfaction is referral. A large number of people picked a neutral position, probably foregoing the option of negative accessments. Apparently, too, quite a few people come to the Center with the expectation of obtaining very specific information and the counseling process does little to modify this narrow view. The cross tabulations show that males were seeking specific information on education for a job, for example, and those with more education seeking college study information.

The comments give some help with the expectations people had: "Center could use more testing tools to help pinpoint abilities, interests, and personality of clients." Or another view; "Center can't work miracles, might be more valuable if specific advice were given concerning how to go about locating a fulfilling position" or a recommendation that the Center "give aptitude tests to help people decide what they could succeed in" and "improve services and evaluation for those with college degrees and professional occupations particularly women returning to careers after starting families." Even more specific

Table 5

Information Obtained From Cont act

	Very Satis-factory	Satis-factory	Neither Sat. Nor Unsatis-factory	Unsatis-factory	Very Unsatis-factory	No Answer	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
Accuracy of information	59	62	13	2	0	(19)	4.3	0.70
Timeliness of information	63	58	14	2	0	(18)	4.3	0.72
Specific information expected	61	60	16	9	0	(9)	4.2	0.86
Service at referral	32	37	25	1	0	(60)	4.0	0.80

Table 6

Needs at First Contact

Looking back to the time of your first contact with the Center, what needs were important to you?

	N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
(1) Career:			
To Analyze My Job Situation	83	4.4	0.74
To Clarify My Employment Goals	90	4.4	0.70
To Find My First Job	14	4.1	0.73
To Change To A New Job	61	4.3	0.78
To Obtain Part-time Employment	20	3.8	0.93
To Plan For A Lifelong Career	83	4.6	0.57
To Resolve A Family Situation	15	4.1	0.74
To Decide About My Life Goals	83	4.6	0.63
(2) Education:			
To Complete My High School Education	17	4.4	0.79
To Complete A Vocational Or Special Training Program	30	4.2	0.82
To Finish My College Education	30	4.3	0.84
To Undertake College Studies	57	4.3	0.74
To Gain Additional Job-related Education	52	4.4	0.69
To Get Training For A New Job	61	4.4	0.74
To Get More Education For Personal Satisfaction	68	4.4	0.77
To Change From One Educational Program To Another	28	4.4	0.79

was the recommendation for "more info on job opportunities in this area." On the favorable side, it is clear that the tests that are now given at LLC are factor in encouraging people to recommend more tests: "interest tests I took helped me realize there are other jobs available for me," "I discovered I needed professional guidance to determine my real abilities and strengths." Sometimes the favorable reactions are general "Center offers much valuable information," and sometimes very specific: "Needed help with English. The association helped me find a literacy council and _____college."

There is evidence in the comments of a benefit not specifically captured by our survey questions, numerous as they were. Clients gain from sharing the process of decision making. It comes through in comments about the value of testing; "test results surprised me but were proof of my interests." Even more clearly it is found in the way the experience meshed with ongoing processes; "They taught me to set goals for myself," "Center expanded my horizons," "counselors gave me a lot of information and personal contacts." The point not to be missed here is that the Center offers not only information and support but also assistance to clients with the decisions about how to best use information for their own purposes.

4. Needs at the Time of First Contact: Career and Educational (Table 6)

The information on Parts II and III of the survey instrument must be read in quite a different way than the ratings in Part I. Each respondent sorted out from a group of choices the topics she/he found applicable or significant. They then rated the "importance" of the selected topics. We have two clues to the significance of an item,

Table 7

Information Sought at First Contact

Looking back to the time of your first contact with the Center what information was important to you?

	N	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
(1) Career:			
Lists Of Job Opportunities	81	4.5	0.71
Descriptions Of Job Qualifications	82	4.5	0.67
Educational Requirements Of Jobs	90	4.5	0.62
Procedures To Enter Employment	64	4.3	0.78
Support Services For Job Holders; (For Example, Child Care, Etc.)	20	4.1	0.79
(2) Education:			
Information About Testing (Vocational, Entrance, Placement)	64	4.4	0.79
Information On Vocational Or Technical Programs	45	4.4	0.72
Information On College Or Postgraduate Programs	83	4.6	0.58
Procedures For Admission, Readmission, Transfer	57	4.4	0.77
Information On Credit For Military Schooling, On the Job Training	22	4.3	0.83
Financial Aid Information	47	4.4	0.79

the first being the number of persons who identified that particular item, the second being the rating of importance on that item. The table in each case shows both these values. No item was omitted by all respondents.

It can be seen that clarifying employment goals was mentioned most frequently, 90 mentions, but that deciding life goals and planning for career drew higher importance ratings. Analyzing job situations was a considerable interest; 83 mentions, and changing to a new job attracted about one-third of the respondents.

In terms of educational needs, finishing a school program already started at either high school, vocational-technical, or college level was of interest to 77 persons but the importance rating differed with high school completion viewed as most important. Education for personal satisfaction was mentioned by 68 persons and training for a new job was not far behind with 61 mentions and the need to find a way for beginning college training was of interest to 57 persons. In summary, the needs of respondents in the sample were about equally divided between educational topics and job-related topics but employment matters took a top rating on importance. The relationship of education and job is very close for most clients even though counseling centers may sometimes see their primary mission as providing educational information.

5. Information Sought at Time of First Contact: Career and Educational (Table 7)

A list of information items expected at the time of first contact with the Center was also presented for assessment. The major career-

related information sought by clients was data on the educational requirements of jobs (90 mentions) and information on job qualifications was next most mentioned. A sizable number of persons, 81, looked for lists of job opportunities and they rated this information as quite important, 4.5. There were some distinctions by age on this last point with the highest interest levels found among respondents who were in the late 20s and early 30s. One kind of information drew a surprisingly low response, only 20 persons were concerned about support services for job holders. This topic receives considerable public notice but publicity has expanded impressions about this factor out of its real dimensions of importance for this clientele.

Shifting to educational information, we find the heaviest emphasis on college and postgraduate programs, an interest for 83 persons given high importance, 4.6. Test information has special significance and 64 persons were interested in it. Several of the comments recommended more extensive testing as part of the Center program. Again, there was a surprise in that admission, readmission and transfer, subjects one expects to find taken care of within the framework of an institutional counseling program, were of interest for 57 persons and rated 4.4.

When the tabulations which control for marital status, age, sex, and education are examined in detail, there are few strong distinctions about the expectations people brought to the LLC. Nevertheless, there are some useful clues. Deciding on life goals, for example, is of more interest to women than men. Clarifying employment goals is more significant in the middle years of life. Interest in part-time

Table 8

Outcomes or Results

Results	N
Changed Job Within Company	4
Changed Job To Another Company	24
Started My First Job	4
Improved My Income	33
Work Is More Satisfactory	32
Enrolled Fulltime In School Or College	3
Enrolled Part-time Or For Special Courses	38
Completed Plans For Job Change	32
Completed Plans For More Education	59
Put In Application For New Job(s)	47
Applied For Admission To An Educational Program	45
Took The GED Or Other Tests	19
Still Gathering Information On Job Change	49
Still Gathering Information On Further Education	81
Life Interests Have Broadened	63
I Have Met Many New People	35
I Have Joined A New Organization	22
My Family Situation Has Improved	19
No Action Has Been Taken: Still Thinking About It	47
No Action Taken: None Is Likely	5

employment seems to be quite specific to certain life situations showing a rather strong relationship to high "life satisfaction" and to the later years of age. Vocational-technical education appears to have the greatest attraction for single persons in contrast to the data nationally on first time enrollment by age.

6. Outcomes (Table 8)

Possible outcomes presented to respondents covered education and work. They were also ordered from "solid" results in terms of completed action through "planning" behaviors and on to "information gathering" behaviors and finally to "inactivity." From the tabulated responses, it appears that 32 persons completed a significant job adjustment, that is, took a new job or started a job. Similarly, 69 actually enrolled in school, college, or special courses. That means that 101 out of 155 respondents in the tabulation did take some definite action that was in some way related to the association with the Center.

As we move into the outcomes that reflect planning, it is quite possible that overlapping answers will appear since the person might take a job and plan for education at the same time or vice versa. We found that 79 persons had either completed plans for a job change or applied for a new job while 104 had completed plans for more education or applied for admission. Another 19 took tests. Less active are those still gathering job information, 49 in number, and still gathering educational information, 81, the highest number in any of the "results" category.

There were other outcomes: 63 persons reported that their life interests had been broadened. About a third of the responding group have not yet taken any action.

Considering the short time since the Center opened, the extent of its influence among these clients is rather remarkable. Many of them were apparently ready to act in some way and the contact became a crystallizing or precipitating factor. This suggests that "readiness" might be a condition worth assessing during the early interview sessions. Follow-ups with those who present high readiness might encourage more effective use of limited time and resources.

7. Global Measures (Table 9)

Respondents were asked to submit global judgments about two subjects: The experience with the Center, "the way it all turned out," and how they felt about "life as a whole." Using a seven position scale to match the one developed with great care by Withey and Andrews for a national study of social indicators, we can gain a comparison of percentages across various groups. Looking first at client judgments about "how it all turned out," we find 99 judged the experience to be "satisfying" or "very satisfying." Another 23 did not answer the question, possibly because they did not consider the experience to be closed. When we turn to the judgments about life as a whole, we find that the mean score measuring satisfaction of respondents in the Lifelong Learning Center sample of 4.9 to be somewhat below the mean score reported in Withey and Andrews' national sample, 5.3. The percentage distributions are even more interesting than the scores because 13 percent in the national sample

Table 9

Global Judgments

A - Global Judgment of LLC Experience

	Very Satis-factor-	Satis-factory	Neither Satis-factory Nor Unsatisfactory	Unsatis-factory	Very Unsatis-factory	No Answer	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
The Way It All Turned Out	42	57	30	3	0	23	4.0	0.79

B - Global Judgment Of Overall Well-Being
(percentage distributions)

	Delighted	Pleased	Mostly Satisfied	Mixed	Mostly Dissatis-fied	Unhappy	Terrible	Mean Score
National Sample (Withey-Andrews)	13	33	34	13	3	2	2	5.3
LLC Sample	5.7	24.1	36.9	23.4	7.8	2.1	0	4.9

C - Global Judgment of Overall Well-Being By Sex

Sample by Sex:							
Female	6.0	16.4	44.8	26.9	4.5	1.5	0
Male	3.1	31.3	18.8	18.8	21.9	6.3	0

were delighted with life, less than half that proportion, 5.7 percent in the LLC sample confessed to ebullience. At the negative end of the scale, there are twice as many in the "mostly dissatisfied" category among the Lifelong Learning Center clients as there are in the population at large. These data suggest that people who come to the Lifelong Learning Center may have specific needs for information recommendations for action but they also carry with them feelings of discomfort and dissatisfaction about their situation. At the same time there is no evidence of major life crises to be met. These fragments of data go far toward explaining why such a high value was attached to the quality of the interaction, the concern and nurturing attitudes, exhibited by the counselors and sensed by the clients.

We can gain some further clues about dissatisfaction by looking at the percentage distribution of female and male respondents. These show a bimodal distribution for males with high points in the "mostly dissatisfied" category at one end of the scale and in the "pleased" category at the other end of the scale. In contrast, the distribution for females follows a bell-shaped curve with a slight tilt toward the "dissatisfaction" end. These kinds of global judgments have not been widely used in reaction studies but they appear to add useful interpretive information.

8. Interviews

It is difficult and perhaps unwise to dissect anything as personal as interview responses into categories but some general impressions can be gained by grouping the information. For most of the interviewees, the possibility of a contact with LLC came at the right moment.

The nature of that "readiness" differed quite widely. For some it was an event: heart attack, job loss, surgery, that forced some major readjustment. For others, the condition of readiness grew out of one of the natural transitions of life, that is, a change in family structure, movement from one educational level to another, or a change in marital status. Then, too, there were situations in which a chronic condition of dissatisfaction, a boring job, too little money, a "useless" college degree had existed but were ignored or suppressed until the Center held out a possible method of changing the condition of discomfort. Another group of participants were already moving forward under their own initiative and the Center was one more instrument in that forward movement. Even from such a small sample as this, it is clear that the Center cannot predicate its program on any simplified assumptions about motivation.

9. Cluster Analysis

A first tendency in classifying clients of an educational enterprise into groups, sometimes the only one, is to categorize on the basis of characteristics most convenient and most familiar to the planner. Almost automatically we turn to age, sex, occupation, and level of schooling even though these may not have any particular educational significance. For this reason an effort was made to typologize the respondents in terms of their reactions to the experience at the Center.

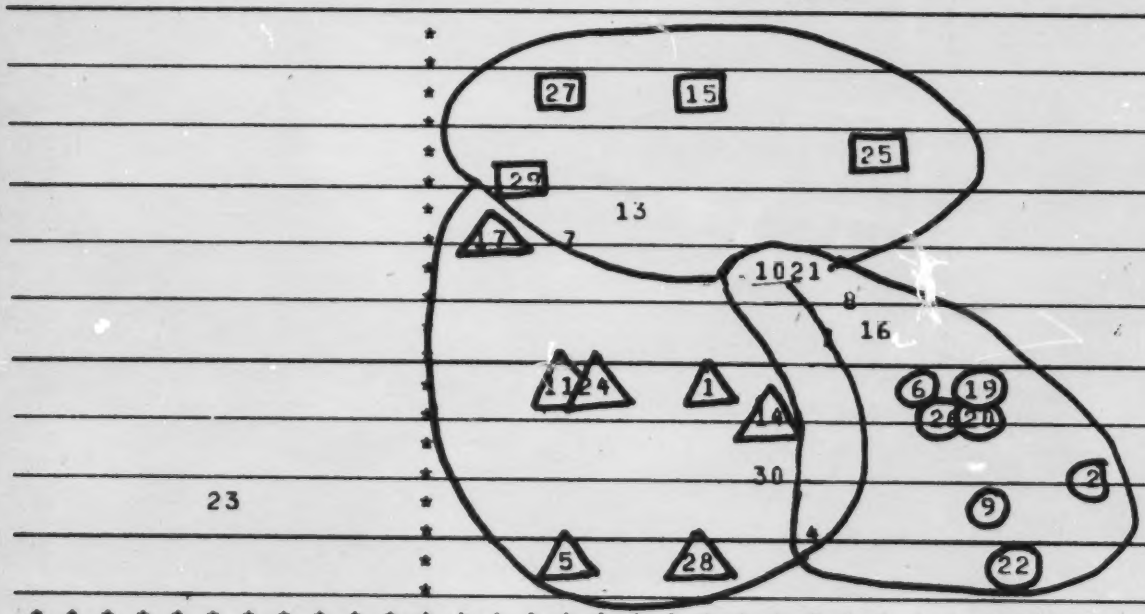
To make a cluster analysis of individuals a modified factor analysis was used. By means of "Q technique" described in Gorsuch (1974) the matrix of cases and variables was transposed. When the factor analysis using varimax rotation is complete the cases are

Fig. 1

TRANSPOSED FACTOR ANALYSIS

	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3
SS01	0.38089	0.64922	0.39676
SS02	0.94517	0.02635	0.22470
SS03	0.61361	0.65386	-0.11169
SS04	0.53523	0.56041	0.13225
SS05	0.19891	0.84793	0.07642
SS06	0.69828	0.58667	0.39413
SS07	0.19267	0.53509	0.62147
SS08	0.56921	0.43235	0.52187
SS09	0.79150	0.33553	0.19496
SS10	0.49301	0.20045	0.56024
SS11	0.17858	0.64812	0.37335
SS12	0.75394	0.13569	0.35250
SS13	0.27543	0.61416	0.65927
SS14	0.48124	0.60817	0.33783
SS15	0.39213	-0.05745	0.85737
SS16	0.60160	0.67497	0.45577
SS17	0.87472	0.67865	0.60322
SS18	0.50475	0.52978	0.59396
SS19	0.79533	0.11749	0.36788
SS20	0.79263	0.37338	0.32114
SS21	0.51275	0.50223	0.57783
SS22	0.81165	0.22526	0.08535
SS23	-0.25042	0.35053	0.16577
SS24	0.23426	0.66499	0.39515
SS25	0.62507	0.16344	0.75188
SS26	0.73676	0.40277	0.30220
SS27	0.15001	0.27223	0.87582
SS28	0.36408	0.67753	0.09922
SS29	0.10203	0.35567	0.72702
SS30	0.47170	0.39848	0.23524

HORIZONTAL FACTOR 1 ○ VERTICAL FACTOR 3 □ FACTOR 2 △



1 = SS01
3 = SS03
5 = SS05
7 = SS07
9 = SS09
11 = SS11
13 = SS13
15 = SS15
17 = SS17
19 = SS19
21 = SS21
23 = SS23
25 = SS25
27 = SS27
29 = SS29

grouped. By examining the variables that are correlated with the cases, it is possible to identify the characteristics associated with each cluster.

Three groups of 30 subjects, each involving the same 66 variables, were correlated, the matrix inverted, the factor analyzed. The resulting clusters were not well defined enough to support a meaningful interpretation. The display, Figure 1 , is representative of the pattern.

G. Conclusions

1. The quality of interaction between client and counselor at the first meeting is of paramount importance. The role of nurturance and support, of the Rogerian fundamentals of caring, contact, and acceptance, emphasize the importance of having well prepared professional counselors at the entry point. To see the experience of the client as only, or even primarily, as information-seeking would appear to be a misinterpretation. Since people were sometimes critical of the information but still approving of counselor behavior, the distinction is easily made by clients.

2. For adults the idea of "education" is not separate from job conditions, family life, and personal outlook. Professionals in education tend to see schooling as intrinsically valuable and worthy of a high priority. During the years of compulsory schooling that may be accurate: at least it is institutionalized. In adult life the value of education must be redefined into instrumental and personal terms each time an experience is undertaken. As these data show what people "need" is a better relationship with their job or with their

own life pattern. For many, education is a means to that but the counseling center for adults must be prepared to work with the non-educational areas as well.

3. The previous point leads into the idea that the nature of the network of contacts into which the initial session leads may well, over the long run, determine the true effectiveness of the LLC. The network is the way of reaching into real life situations of work place and family if the client's interests are centered there. Most obvious evidence of this is the clients' constant emphasis in studies such as this on job opportunities lists.

4. The fact that all items under "needs" and "outcomes" were elected by at least one person and that no items were added substantiates the observation by Cross (1977) that we know what people are interested in. The process factors are still to be determined.

H. Observations

Some interesting questions arise from this study:

1. Is it possible to determine which clients are "ready" to move through a decision and action process? Counseling is an expensive service, and if the degree of "readiness" could be ascertained cost effectiveness would be increased.

2. The conditions of network effectiveness, how it is established and maintained, is a question of great importance. If the amount of effort required to sustain an informed, cooperative, and sensitive network is excessive then the high quality of the first encounter may be insignificant.

3. The notion that counseling centers not affiliated with educational institutions have a neutrality that is beneficial to clients needs to be tested. If chains of adult counseling centers are established they will require supporting services of a kind (testing, health, placement files) already present in many educational institutions.

4. Even in the success of this Lifelong Learning Center, there are questions about unmet needs. Neither the Puerto Rican nor Black communities were much involved with LLC. For open access counseling to centers what prerequisites exist?

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